

27 April 2007

Mr J Deans  
Headteacher  
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West End Lane  
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Dear Mr Deans

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF ROSSINGTON PHEASANT BANK JUNIOR SCHOOL

### Introduction

Following my visit with Terry McDermott and John Brennan, Additional Inspectors, to your school on the 25 and 26 April, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2006.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, visited lessons and an assembly, and scrutinised documents and samples of pupils' work. Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the senior team, subject leaders and pupils. Discussions also took place with two governors, a representative from the local authority and the consultant helping the school.

### Context

Since the school became subject to special measures in November 2006, the deputy headteacher has left, due to a promotion to headship. Because of the timing of her departure, at Christmas, the school was unable to recruit an immediate replacement. This meant that the school has operated without a

deputy headteacher for a term. The school has now appointed a suitable replacement. However, the new deputy headteacher only took up his post a week ago. The school currently has a vacancy for a mathematics coordinator. One of the schools assistant headteachers is currently acting as the coordinator for mathematics until the school can find a suitable replacement. A class teacher who had been absent from the school for an extended period, has recently handed in his notice. This has created a further vacancy. The school currently has two full-time supply staff. The local authority is providing a high level of support. However, it judges that there is no scope for closure of this school at this time.

## Achievement and standards

Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with broadly average levels of attainment. Validated results for English and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were particularly low. This represented inadequate progress.

There is considerable evidence from the school's latest analysis of its own data, including test results, and inspectors' lesson observations and scrutiny of pupil's work to indicate that many pupils in the school are now making better progress. This is particularly so in Year 6, though the picture is less certain for pupils in earlier year groups, particularly in Year 3.

Teachers systematically and reliably measure and record what pupils know and can do. The school are now using this information to provide additional support for those pupils that need it. Strategic planning is sound. The school has recently introduced several well-founded initiatives to raise standards, for example 'big writing', which aims to give pupils more experiences of creative and extended writing. Frequent, robust monitoring is undertaken, which provides the school with reliable evidence of the extent to which pupils are making progress. This shows that the initiatives are beginning to improve learning. However, they are too new to demonstrate their full effect on standards right across the school.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Plan future improvements to focus on actions aimed at raising pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and rigorously evaluate the outcomes of the actions to ensure that they are having the required impact on standards – satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

Pupils are polite, well behaved and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils are cooperative and listen carefully to instructions and to each other. Many in Years 4, 5 and 6 can be trusted to complete tasks when not being directly supervised. Attendance remains below the national average but is

adversely affected by the long-term absences of a few pupils. The school is working hard to tackle this. Pupils say that they enjoy school and feel safe and they know what to do if they feel unsure about anything. They understand how exercise and a balanced diet help them to keep healthy. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory, with some good features. Assemblies, for example, help pupils to reflect on their own experiences, think about different values and appreciate different perspectives.

## Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, it is too variable in quality to ensure that all pupils are making satisfactory progress across the school.

Recent improvement strategies are beginning to bear fruit, particularly in Year 6, where the support has been most intensive. However, their impact is not yet universal across the school. The school hope these inconsistencies will disappear as all staff use these new strategies more routinely. Clear assessment procedures, based on regular testing, have helped give clarity of purpose to lessons and have given teachers a better understanding of how well pupils are doing. The school is using assessment data effectively to set pupils individual targets and to guide additional support for underachieving pupils.

There is greater consistency in the way teachers match pupils' work to their learning needs. Better liaison between support staff and teachers is ensuring that support staff are suitably deployed and have specific remits in lessons. However, there remains much work to do to ensure that everyday work matches the full ability range across the school. Talk is being used to good effect in many classes to help develop pupils' thinking.

Literacy, numeracy, science and music enjoy a high profile in the curriculum. However, this squeezes the time left for some other subjects and leads to an imbalance of experiences for pupils, especially those in Year 6. This is a cause of frustration for some pupils. The school is aware of the issues and has augmented curriculum provision through a range of enrichment activities.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Raise standards in English and mathematic by ensuring all teachers match work to pupils learning – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

The school has set a clear agenda for raising standards and improving pupils' achievement. The staff, under the leadership of the headteacher, have responded very positively to the categorisation of special measures and are

working hard to remove this at the earliest possible time. There is a sense of purpose in the school and staff recognise that they have a vital part to play, alongside senior management, in tackling underachievement

Senior and middle managers are capable and have complementary skills. They are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Effective management ensures the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Senior leaders have been proactive and have introduced a number of improvement strategies, which are proving effective and underpin the progress secured so far in addressing the issues from the last inspection. The assessment tracker, for example, enables staff to gain a very good awareness of the progress individual pupils are making and to identify target groups for specific support such as booster sessions, accelerated learning classes, and/or special educational needs support.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards are improving. The introduction of robust monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, alongside continuing professional development to aid planning, classroom practice and assessment for learning, is having a positive effect. Subject leaders, with the support of advisers and strategy consultants have been key in the dissemination of these developments. Subject leaders now have protected time to fulfil their monitoring role. As a result former barriers to achievement are now being dismantled, which is contributing to much-improved outcomes for many pupils in English and mathematics, although at this stage it is not consistently the case across the whole school. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate. Governors are committed and supportive of the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by improving the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards by subject leaders – satisfactory.

#### External support

The local authority is providing a good level of support to the school. As a result the school is benefiting from intensive support from a range of local authority advisers and national strategy consultants. In addition the school is working closely with a successful partner primary school. The school also benefits from the support of a consultant project manager. The consultant has focused upon raising the quality of teaching and learning and building further capacity in senior and middle management. The local authority's statement of action now meets requirements. The proposed actions are relevant, clear and specific. The local authority has exercised its powers to appoint two additional governors.

## Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed, but not into Year 3.

## Priorities for further improvement

- The priorities for further improvement continue to be the key issues previously identified by the last inspection.
- In addition, the school should ensure that all pupils are able to access a broad and balanced curriculum and that there is suitable coordination and monitoring of the impact of the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Specialist Director for Education Standards for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely



John Young  
Her Majesty's Inspector